

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)**SciVerse ScienceDirect**

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 84 (2013) 909 – 913

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

3rd World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance (WCPCG-2012)

# The economic crisis impact on coping styles, mental and physical health and performances in a financial company from Romania

Mihai Aniței<sup>a</sup>\*, Mihaela Chraif<sup>b</sup>, Ioana Stoica<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup>Professor PhD, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Bd. M. Kogalniceanu 050107, Bucharest, Romania<sup>b</sup>Lecturer PhD, Postdoctoral fellow, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Bd. M. Kogalniceanu 050107, Bucharest, Romania<sup>c</sup>Asistent PhD student, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Bd. M. Kogalniceanu 050107, Bucharest, Romania

## Abstract

Stress in organizations is felt both at individual and organizational level. The objective of the current research is to highlight the impact of the economic crisis on the predictive power of the variables: satisfaction, physical health, mental health, stress reactions and coping for employees' performance at work in a financial banking unit. Participants were 83 employees from several departments of the financial company, aged between 25 and 46 years old ( $M=35.27$ ;  $S.D.=6.72$ ), male and female, work experience within the company of minimum 2 years, in an attempt to distribute these characteristics in equal as possible. The results confirmed the hypothesis ( $p < 0.05$ ) and, therefore, the regression model applied for the pressure of the economic crisis is valid for the selected predictors.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu &amp; Dr. Mukaddes Demirok, Near East University, Cyprus

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, physical health, mental health, stress reactions, coping;

## 1. Introduction

Economic crisis affected many companies in Romanian in the last decade. This is why employees feel besides the pressure of work overload, the pressure imposed by the economic crisis. In response to the situations of stress coping mechanisms are often adopted. Coping is a response to a threat assessment, defined as a set of cognitive and behavioral efforts for the management of specific internal requirements or external assessed as draining or overwhelming for that person's resources (Lazarus, Folkman, 1984).

Studying the cognitive bases of emotion, the cognitive evaluation mechanisms of events or situations that are likely to provoke stress-emotions is of great importance in the organizational area. Wallbott & Scherer (1991) studied coping and stress on the background of stress-emotions, as well as complex configurations of stress management strategies. Given the relationships between stress, frustration and anxiety Rivoirier (1989; 1992) suggests that it would be appropriate to make the connection of the term stress with frustration, with feelings of fear, of danger, with the daily irritation, with living with the meaning of danger, consequently with more extensive concepts than that of emotion. Stress is related, for example, with anxiety. According to the principle of

Corresponding author name: \* Mihai Aniței. Tel.: +40721232207.

E-mail address: [anitei\\_mihai@yahoo.com](mailto:anitei_mihai@yahoo.com)

interrelations between somatic and psychic, it can be stated that any change in cognition may produce a physiological or somatic-physiological change. According to the transactional theory, coping lies in the effort happening at cognitive, physiological and behavioral level in order to reduce / minimize, remove, possess or tolerate internal and external demands in the context of the transaction individual - organizational environment, demands that exceed the resources / the personal real possibilities (Folkman et al. 1986).

The transactional model of stress can relate to the psychological health model developed by Bruchon-Schweltzer and Dantzer (1994). In recent years, a new theory of functional organization for the defenses and coping mechanisms emerged. While the classical conception (Menninger, 1963; Haan, 1977) argued that coping mechanisms precede defense mechanisms, current conceptions show that, in fact, defenses mechanisms precede coping (Callahan & Chabrol, 2004). Most often, we develop strategies to eliminate the negative affective states caused by stressors, more precisely, we put into action the coping mechanisms. In most papers, the authors insist on the two types of coping mechanisms, first analyzed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984): a) Coping focused on problem, which involve strategies orientated for the event "management", b) Coping focused on emotions refers to strategies which aim at adjusting emotions associated with the stressful event. From the perspective of cognitive psychology.

The concept of health as defined by the World Health Organization (1946; 2006), refers to "a good physical, mental and social state" therefore, expanding the notion from the biological area to the social one. Health expresses the adaptive capacity of individuals to the natural and social environment. Work, as a specific human method of adapting to the environment, it is the most obvious criterion for evaluating health, conditioning both biological state and the social integration one. In time, if practical steps are not taken to remove stressors or, where they cannot be removed entirely, to reduce them and increase the person's adaptability to stress, somatic diseases may appear, and later even organic disease. The first signs which are associated with occupational stress and that need to be considered as an alarm signal given by the body are (Kahn & Byosiére, 1992 as cited by Muchinski, 2000; Holdevici, 2009): fatigue, sleep disorders, headaches and stomach aches, poor digestion, poor concentration, irritability, emotional lability.

For diseases with chronic evolution is more difficult to assess whether they are caused by occupational stress or if it is only a contributing factor for these diseases, yet in different studies the chronic stress at the workplace has been associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Based on previous studies (Chraif & Stefan, 2010; Chraif & Aniței, 2011; Tănase, Manea, Chraif, Aniței & Coblăș, 2012), the company analyzed in the current study is an international financial institution which opened a branch in Romania after 1990 and is part of a multinational group. The company offers a full range of products and services for all categories of clients: individuals, small and medium companies, large corporations and financial institutions.

## **2. Objective and hypotheses**

### *2.1. Objective*

This paper aimed at highlighting a regression model between occupational stress, health and performance at workplace in the financial banking unit from Romania during the economic crisis.

### *2.2. Hypothesis*

Occupational stress, coping styles and physical and mental health are predictors of workplace performance within the financial and banking organization which was being studied.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

Participants were 83 employees from several departments of the financial company, aged between 25 and 46 years old ( $M=35.27$ ;  $S.D.=6.72$ ), male and female, work experience within the company minimum of 2 years, in an attempt to distribute these characteristics as equal as possible.

#### 3.2. The instruments

The questionnaire CAPES (Aniței, Chraif & Bârcă, 2010) and the performances at workplace questionnaire. The questionnaire CAPES contains the dimensions in figure 1.

<b>Description</b>	The questionnaire consists of 7 sections: Section I. Occupational stress Questionnaire - which includes 7 chapters (contentment, satisfaction, stress, coping, physical health, mental health, behavior at the workplace) Section II. Organizational justice Section III. Confidence in the organization - which includes three parts Section IV. Behaviour in organization Section V. Measuring attitudes towards work and life - which includes 8 scales Section VI. Your health Section VII. Measuring work emotions Each item will be evaluated depending on the option chosen by the participant.
<b>Task:</b>	Each subject had to tick on the answer sheet, the choice which best reflects his or her opinion about each statement, according to the sections' or chapters' scales.
<b>Aim:</b>	Establishing the level of occupational stress.
<b>Method of collecting data:</b>	Individually printed questionnaire form, along with instructions for completion and answer sheets.

Figure 1 CAPES questionnaire dimensions (Aniței & Chraif, 2011)

From this questionnaire, only the dimensions matching the variables used in the multiple linear regression model were applied: satisfaction, physical health, mental health, stress reactions and coping.

### 4. Results

By applying a regression model, statistically significant correlations between occupational stress, health and workplace performance facets were the data obtained. The predictive value of work-related stress and health in relation to individual performance at work was also determined.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Total performances	28.75	5.31
satisfaction	5.21	.37
Physical health	3.62	.48
Mental health	3.11	.63
Stress reactions	4.12	.52
Coping	4.35	.48

Table 1 shows the means and the standard deviations for the dependent variable performance at the workplace and the independent variables: Satisfaction, physical health, mental health, stress reactions and coping.

Table 2 R and R Square values

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.824	.678	.652	2.88

Analyzing table 2 can be seen the value of multiple correlation coefficient ( $R=.824$ ) and R Square coefficient ( $R\text{ Square}=.678$ ) can be seen; the regression model provides a reduction of the error with 67.8%.

Table 3 The regression model coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		P
1	(Constant)	43.35	15.26		3.56	.010
	Total performances	6.34	2.990	.36	2.82	.024
	satisfaction	7.83	2.82	.47	3.57	.002
	Physical health	9.47	1.74	.82	6.608	.000
	Mental health	5.43	1.56	.43	3.32	.004
	Stress reactions	11.34	1.38	.84	7.21	.000
	Coping	-15.72	3.39	-1.51	-4.86	.000

Analyzing table 3 the independent variables: satisfaction, physical health, mental health, stress reactions and are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and therefore accomplish the role of predictors for the workplaces performances.

Therefore, the simple linear regression equation according to table 3 will be the following:

$Y = 43.35 + 7.83 * \text{satisfaction} + 9.47 * \text{Physical health} + 5.43 * \text{Mental health} + 11.34 * \text{Stress reactions} - 15.72 * \text{Coping}$

## 5. Conclusions

The regression model having as criterion the performances within the workplace reduces the error with 67.8% ( $R\text{square}=.678$ ). Analyzing the  $\beta$  coefficients can be assumed that the variables: stress reactions, health and coping styles are predictors for performances at workplace ( $p < 0.05$ ). In order to improve performances during the impact of the economic crisis, positive feedback and workplace remunerations are important in order to balance the salary cuts. Also, improving health and medical remuneration is an important technique to balance the salary cuts and to increase the employee satisfaction within the workplace. Apart from the organizational intervention done at level of management for reducing the work overload of tasks and activities at work, at individual level different measures can also be taken. Therefore, another solution to reduce and prevent stress is positive thinking and calm. These will help the employees to cope with difficult situations and consequently cope with negative effects of stress, both physical and mental, will not appear anymore. It is important for the employee not to come running out of time to treat each new or difficult situation with humour, without considering that if he or she does not succeed, he or she will not be able to face the same situation in the future. Therefore, those employees who although go through stressful situations, but think positively and consider each failure as a new attempt to succeed will not have health problems (Chraif & Stefan, 2010; Chraif & Aniței, 2011).

## References

- Anitei, M., Chraif, M., & Bârcă, A. (2010). The validation of an academic environment stress measurement instrument. Proceeding of 4th International Conference "Education Facing Contemporary World Issues", Pitești, Romania, 2010.
- Bruchon-Schweitzer, & Dantzer R.(1994). *Introduction dans la psychologie de la sante*. Press Univ. France, Paris, 13-22.
- Callahan, S., & Chabrol, H. (2004). Relations entre défense et coping: étude du Défense Style Questionnaire et du Brief COPE dans un échantillon non clinique d'adultes jeunes[Relationships between Defense and Coping : A Study using the Defense Style Questionnaire and the Brief COPE in a non-clinical sample of young adults] . *L'Encéphale*, XXX, 92-93.
- Chraif,M.,& Stefan, C. (2010). A practical model for the development of public servants' competitiveness and professional performance. *Romanian Journal of Applied Experimental Psychology*, volume 1, issue 1, pp. 44-57.
- Chraif, M., & Aniței, M. (2011). The impact of economic crisis on occupational stress and counterproductive behavior in a food and beverage restaurant chain from Romania. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 2644-2650.
- Holdevici, I. (2009). *Tratat de psihoterapii cognitive comportamentale* [Handbook of Cognitive Psychotherapy], Bucharest: Ed. trei.
- Folkman, S. Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C. DeLongis, A., & Gruen, R. J. (1986). Dynamics of a stressful encounter: Cognitive appraisal, coping, and encounter outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50(5), 992- 1003.
- Haan, N. (1977). *Coping and defending: Processes of self-environment organization*. New York: Academic Press.
- Kahn, R. L. & Byosiére, P. (1992). Stress in organizations. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M.Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational Psychology*.
- Muchinsky, P.M. (2000). *Psychology Applied to Work. An Introduction to Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Sixth Edition. Ed. Wadsworth-Thomson Learning.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984), *Stress Appraisal and Coping*. New York: Springer.
- Menninger, K. (1963). *The vital balance*. New York: The Viking Press.
- Rivolier, J. (1989). *L'homme stressé* [The stressed man]. Paris: P. U. F.
- Wallbott, H. G., & Scherer K. R. (1991). Stress specificities: Differential effects of coping style, gender, and type of stressor on autonomic arousal, facial expression, and subjective feeling. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 61, 147-156
- Rivolier, J. (1992). *Facteurs humains et situations extrêmes* [Human factors and extreme situations]. Paris: Masson.
- Tănase, S., Manea, C. Chraif, M., Anței, M., & Coblaș, V. (2012). Assertiveness and Organizational Trust as predictors of mental and Physical Health in a Romanian Oil Company Original Research Article, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, Elsevier*, 33, 1047-1051.
- World Health Organization. 1946. [www.who.int/bulletin/archives/80(12)981.pdf WHO definition of Health], Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19–22 June 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.
- World Health Organization. 2006. Constitution of the World Health Organization - Basic Documents, Forty-fifth edition, Supplement, October 2006.